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Statement submitted by Child Aid Development Foundation International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

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Statement

After 15 years of the Millennium Development Goals, a new era in global development is almost here, the sustainable development goals. The sustainable development goals are coming at a time when innovations in technology are not only revolutionising how we communicate, but forcing us to redefine how we engage with the structures that govern us. Do we think the solutions to poverty can only come from those at the top to rescue those at the bottom? From our experience working in rural poor communities, development work is not sustainable when poor people are not connected to decision-makers.

Therefore for sustainable development goals to bring that solution, consultation should start from the bottom with the very poor people. The microphone should be passed on to the poor countries and let the rich countries listen. Across the African continent, communities are actively engaged with grassroots civil society organisations that they trust to have their interests at heart. Local civil society community-based organizations and individuals have been credited with helping the fight against poverty. They are first to respond and continue to address their communities' needs. How much faster would they have been responded to if development organisations actively engaged with them first?

All the tools, trends, and platforms are useless if a cultural shift doesn't happen within international development organisations. More have to be open to public engagement and outside input. Development's elite have to be willing to accept that the wisdom of the masses in the poor communities is an important ingredient to informed decision-making and engaging them to find solutions to their own problems.

The success of sustainable development goals will depend on how well we all communicate and engage. Everyone's voice, from a child, average citizens to local, national and international policymakers and United Nations delegates is important to achieving our development goals beyond 2015. As a famous African proverb states: "If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together".